

DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT

Suggested

Quarterly Narrative Report

The information that DEI projects provide in the ETA Narrative Report template helps to track grantee actual performance outcomes in relation to the negotiated goals on a quarterly basis. For each reporting period, it would be helpful if grantees could provide cumulative information for each quarterly update.

Grantee Information	
Grantee Name: Minnesota Department of Employment & Economic Development	
Address: 332 Minnesota Street, Suite E200	
City/State/Zip: Saint Paul, MN 55101	
Grant Number : DI – 23803-12-75-A-27	Report Period: 04/01/13-06/30/13

Status of Grant Implementation and Progress To-Date

For this grant reporting period, please provide the status of implementation of the Strategic Service Delivery Components that your project is implementing to include: a. current status; b. challenges, and c. notable activities:

- Integrated Resource Team Approach:**

- a. Current status:**

MN's three Implementation Sites have greatly advanced the development of their respective Integrated Resource Teams (IRTs) during this quarter. PACER Center has developed the DEI Information Sheet, Youth Profile Form, and Youth Action Plan which will facilitate formation of IRTs for individual youth by identifying areas of need within the 5 Guidepost area as well as resources that can help meet those needs. Activities in the implementation sites include:

MVAC (WSA 7) DRC has met with several key stakeholders and organizations in the community that could be potential IRT members to identify the services available as well as services gaps for youth with disabilities. Key partners include Vocational Rehabilitation Services, State Services for the Blind, Mankato Area Community Transition Interagency Committee (CTIC) members, District #77 Transition Staff, MRCI-Worksource, Steps, Inc., Veterans Services, Nicollet County Children's Mental Health Collaborative, Minnesota Valley Education District, SMILES Center for Independent Living, Social Security Administration (SSA) Field Office-Mankato. All parties are excited about the prospect of working together more closely and agreed to participate in the IRT process when appropriate.

RMCEP is poised to launch the DEI project in three different WorkForce centers. A DEI policy

with service delivery strategies is on its second draft and will be completed by the time DEED is ready to begin official enrollment of participants into the DEI project on August 1st.

WDI (WSA 8) continues to educate youth case managers about the purpose and function of the IRT, and is working with the case managers to identify and contact partners who will potentially participate as IRT members.

b. Challenges:

MVAC has found that they are not able to fully engage all appropriate IRT members until DEI participant enrollment occurs. They are contacting all possible members with the understanding they may need to connect with additional prospects based on the individual needs of the youth. Now that enrollment is beginning as of August 1, this difficulty should be alleviated.

RMCEP program staff and VRS are working on doing a better job of collaborating before, during and after an Individual Service Strategy (ISS) is completed, with the participant being the focal point of this collaboration. Training the program staff on how to effectively utilize the DRC is a priority.

c. Notable activities:

The MVAC DRC developed and continues to update the Guideposts Resource Mapping Tool to identify services and service gaps for youth with disabilities. In addition, the South Central Youth Council developed and printed a youth directory of resources available to all youth in the nine county area that can be used as a resource for the DEI project as well. A sample of the directory can be found at www.workforcecouncil.org/youth-council/projects/youth-directories/

RMCEP held the first IRT meeting in Moorhead, MN with the following partners: Participant, DRC, WIA youth coordinator, VRS Representative, Work Incentive Connection CWIC and parents of the participant.

The WDI DRC attended a CTIC meeting in Olmsted County and continued to share information about IRTs.

With input from multiple project stakeholders including DRCs and other personnel from each implementation site, steering committee and DEED staff, PACER drafted the Youth Profile form and Youth Action Plan form to be used by case managers and direct service staff and facilitate the formation of the IRTs.

• **Guideposts for Success**

a. Current status:

Project Lead and Implementation Site staff has received instruction in the Guideposts at the DEI national meeting in March and follow up training at the DEI orientation provided by NDI and NCWD/Youth TA liaisons in Roseville, MN on May 29-30. Further discussion of applying the Guideposts in their work with youth with disabilities has been included in the DRC roundtables held in May and June. The local sites have utilized the Guideposts mapping tool to

talk about the Guideposts with their local staffs.

The Guideposts are fully integrated into the RMCEP 2013 Youth Plan. Agency program coordinators were asked to identify agencies and resources, both internal and external, on a resource mapping tool. This tool effectively introduced the tenets of the Guideposts.

DRCs in the other two implementation sites have begun to identify how to incorporate the Guideposts for Success in the application process and customer flow of youth services.

b. Challenges:

The introduction of the holistic approach of the Guideposts requires some change on the part of the local sites as youth staff becomes familiar with the framework and incorporate it into their interactions and planning with youth. The technical assistance resources available through the national DEI partners will help address this challenge.

c. Notable activities:

The Youth Profile Form and Youth Action Plan were developed by PACER with input from the DRCs and other project stakeholders to facilitate the delivery of youth services in the implementation sites around the Guideposts. An informational flyer about the MN DEI project highlights the Guideposts for Success as one of the key strategies of the project.

• Partnerships and Collaboration:

a. Current status:

At the state level, Minnesota's Shared Vision for Youth (SVY) State Team continues to form the basis for strong interagency relationships that will benefit the MN DEI project. The core of the DEI Steering Committee consists of members of the SVY team. Minnesota's youth service providers have long relied on partnerships and collaboration as a strategy for delivering effective services with limited resources that meet the needs of youth customers. Leveraging resources for the benefit of all parties included in these partnerships is critical and will be important to sustaining the MN DEI project.

MVAC DRC continues to meet with key stakeholders and organizations in the community to get the word out about the DEI project, identify the services available and the gaps in services for youth with disabilities.

WDI DRC has found the Guideposts Resource Mapping Tool to be valuable in identifying the areas in which partnership is strong, and areas where collaboration can be improved. The results have helped direct energy to improving collaboration in areas where it is lacking.

RMCEP has established relationships with many of the partners that will provide the core services to DEI participants and is continuing to look for additional opportunities to develop these relationships. Some of the established partners include VRS, Special Education Instructors, housing advocates, Mahube-OTWA Community Action Partnership, Legal Services Advocacy and CTICs. VRS now wants to become much more involved with RMCEP.

b. Challenges:

Although MN's workforce service delivery system has a rich and successful history of cross-sector engagement, establishing new partnerships and collaborations does take time. In addition, to date it has been difficult to identify all of the appropriate partners to engage or all of the opportunities for leveraging funds until specific youth are identified and enrolled in the project. Local sites have been contacting all possible partners with the understanding that they may not engage all of them or may need to make new contacts based on the needs of the individual youth served. Now that enrollment in the project is beginning as of August 1, this challenge should be alleviated.

c. Notable activities:

Implementation Sites have been provided with their local Community Transition Interagency Committee (CTIC) contact information and have begun establishing connections with those groups to foster the development of the partnership that will provide a strong foundation for the local DEI Integrated Resource Team.

The MVAC DRC has attended a number of events to get the word out about the DEI Project and identify potential new partnerships including:

- Project Community Connect which is a large community event that was held at the Civic Center for people in poverty and homeless to connect to area resources.
- Greater Mankato Career Expo where over 1,200 high school sophomores from area school districts attend a highly interactive career fair with over 200 employers exhibits to learn about occupations in a variety of industries.
- Work Skills Competition, which is an event sponsored by the Mankato Area CTIC for youth with disabilities to participate in job interviewing, application writing and problem solving activities. Youth are judged on their performance by individuals from business and organizations in the community. The youth with the highest scores receive awards.

VRS managers have committed to increasing the level of collaboration with RMCEP. VRS has made the recommendation to create a DEI strategic working group that would bring managers from both agencies into one room to discuss the best way to achieve increased outcomes for both agencies.

DEI DRC roundtables and the NDI-led orientation workshop in May have provided state-level networking opportunities which have resulted in opportunities to create working relationships. VRS, PACER, MN Dept of Education, DEED, and SSA have invited the local implementation sites to participate in several training and collaboration opportunities.

Obstacles/Barriers to Grant Implementation, if applicable:

Provisions in Minnesota's Government Data Practices Act limit the ability of the DEED Statewide Workforce EN to share customer data with SSA/Maximus through the E-Data Share process without the customer's specific consent. This state statute will make it more challenging to check Ticket status for Job Center (WorkForce Center) customers and conduct outreach for the Ticket program. The EN is encouraging the implementation sites to reach out

to customers who are already enrolled in intensive services through the WorkForce Centers and have a relationship with an employment counselor to obtain consent to check Ticket status and assign the Ticket to the EN, if appropriate. This limitation will have an impact on the ability of the local implementation sites to sustain the DEI enhancements with Ticket revenue.

The State Project Lead submitted her resignation effective 7/16/13. Two senior Program Coordinators in DEED's Office of Youth Development have assumed co-leadership of the DEI project as of 7/16/13. They have been involved with various aspects of the development and implementation of Minnesota's DEI project from the very beginning when the proposal was developed, so the transition in the project leadership is not expected to create obstacles to the project's success.

Other Significant Accomplishments:

Minnesota submitted a grant modification request to DOL on May 16 to modify the work plan and budget due to a change in the number of implementation sites. The modification also requested approval to use flexible funds to support occupational skills training, support services and assistive technology for participants where appropriate, and incorporated an Outreach to Schools strategy to identify youth who could benefit from the intensive services provided by program such as WIA and the Minnesota Youth Program and the DEI project for youth with disabilities. Further clarification was provided in response to DOL questions in early July and informal approval was provided in late July. Official approval of the modification request is pending as of the date this report is submitted.

The three implementation sites have begun to identify participants for the project. Thus far the DRCs have identified approximately 80-90 youth who could potentially benefit from the DEI project. Enrollment is beginning as of August 1st.

The MN DEI Project Steering Committee met on April 11. The Minnesota Department of Education hosted the meeting that was attended by members representing Vocational Rehabilitation Services, the Social Security Administration, PACER, DEED, and the Minnesota Department of Education. They provided guidance in regard to implementation matters and expressed their thoughts regarding a project mission statement, marketing materials and future DEI Roundtable topics. The next DEI Steering Committee meeting will be held following receipt of DOL's official approval of Minnesota's grant modification.

The Data Sharing Agreement (DSA) has been sent to Social Dynamics for signature. Once the DSA is returned, DEED's authorized representative will also sign and data sharing for the evaluation can begin.

The MN DEI website continues to be improved and enhanced with information related to the project's implementation. The site contains links for each Implementation Site and has pages for DEI resources, DEI partners, and DEI quarterly and monthly reports. The site also includes the forms developed for project enrollment. See

http://www.positivelyminnesota.com/All_Programs_Services/Office_of_Youth_Development/MN_DEI/index.aspx for more information.

Funding for the three implementation sites has been in place since early February 2013. The two control sites received a modest amount beginning July 1, 2013 for data collection expenses during the project.

The DRCs have continued to receive training which will assist in the effective implementation of the DEI. The national technical assistance partners came to Minnesota on May 29-30, 2013 to provide an overview orientation to the DEI.

The State DEI team developed documents to begin implementing Ticket to Work in the three implementation sites. The documents include: Partnership Plus Agreement between the DEED EN and VRS, Consent to Check Ticket Status Form, Ticket Assignment Agreement Form, and DEED EN draft guidance document. These documents are posted to the DEI project webpage at:

http://www.positivelyminnesota.com/All_Programs_Services/Office_of_Youth_Development/MN_DEI/Ticket_To_Work.aspx

PACER Center is developing curriculum for the first family trainings on the topic “Social Security and Benefit Planning for Transition-Age Youth” based on input from project partners. The first trainings will be held in September 2013.

Under the Interagency Agreement with the MN Department of Education (MDE), local Community Transition Interagency Teams (CTIC) in the three implementation sites were provided with a modest amount of funding to coordinate a minimum of two joint trainings per year with the DRCs. The trainings will coordinate with the Guideposts and may include information on topics such as: service coordination, Disability Benefits 101 website, integrated competitive employment, Ticket to Work, Plans for Achieving Self Support (PASS), career planning, self-advocacy. The seven CTICs involved are each holding planning meetings this fall to begin developing the training.

For this grant reporting period, please describe the development of any DEI products and/or materials (include electronic copies as separate attachments with your report, if available):

The Minnesota DEI website was further developed during this quarter. Please see http://www.positivelyminnesota.com/All_Programs_Services/Office_of_Youth_Development/MN_DEI/index.aspx for more information. The following documents have been added to the website during the quarter and are attached to this report:

- DEI Project Forms, including: Youth Profile, Youth Action Plan, and Youth Supplemental Questionnaire (for evaluation)
- Ticket to Work Documents, including: approved Workforce Payment Agreement, DEED EN-VRS Partnership Plus Agreement, Consent to Check Ticket Status Form, Ticket Assignment Agreement Form, draft DEED EN guidance document

The MN DEI informational flyer is also attached to this report.

Short-term Grant Goals (three - six months):
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Begin enrolling DEI participants• Begin identification of Ticket Holders and assignment of Tickets to the DEED EN• Release of Second Year Work Plan package for implementation sites• Approval of Second Year Plans/Budgets• Release of Second Year funds to implementation sites• Construction of DEI Local Monitoring Guide• On-site monitoring of implementation sites• Continued development of TtW/EN technical assistance and guidance for local implementation sites• Conduct online needs assessment of implementation site staff and local stakeholders to help identify key content for Fall 2013 trainings by Simon Technology Center on assistive technology, webinars and on-site trainings as identified in the work plan• Begin trainings for local implementation site staff• Continued development of MN DEI website• Continued development of DEI Steering Committee membership
Outstanding Questions:
None at this time.